Unit 3
Stress Coping

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Coping

- The process of managing stressors that have been appraised as taxing or exceeding a person's resources, and as the effort to manage environmental and internal demands (Lazarus & Launier, 1978)
- Reflects the way individual interact with stressors in an attempt to return to normality

- Appraisal → involves individual evaluating the effectiveness of the coping strategy and determining whether to continue with this strategy or to opt for alternatives
- Coping involve:
  - Correcting or removing the problem
  - Changing the way a person thinks about the problem → learning to tolerate and accept the problems
- Dynamic → appraisal and re-appraisal, evaluation and re-evaluation

- Responses to stress involving primary appraisal of the external stressor and secondary appraisal of the person's internal resources → coping is seen to involve regulation of the external stressor and regulation of the internal response

Goals of Coping

- Cohen and Lazarus (1979):
  - To reduce stressful environmental conditions and maximize the chance of recovery
  - To adjust or tolerate negative events
  - To maintain a positive self-image
  - To maintain an emotional equilibrium
  - To continue satisfying relationships with others

Ways of Coping

- Approach VS Avoidance (Ruth & Cohen, 1986):
  - Approach → confronting the problem, gathering information, and taking direct action
  - Avoidant → minimizing the importance of the event, effective for short-term stressors
- Effectiveness → depend upon the nature of the stressor

- Problem-focused VS Emotional-focused
  - Usually occurred together
  - Emotional-focused coping is 4.4 times more likely to occur on a day when problem-focused coping had occurred before (than when it had not; Tennen et al, 2000)
- Problem-focused → take action to reduce the demands of stressor or toincrease the resources available to manage it

- Emotional-focused → manage the emotions evoked by the stressful event → using both behavioral and cognitive strategies
- Examples?

Influential Factors on Choosing the Strategy

- Type of problem
- Age
  - Children → problem-focused coping
  - Adolescent → emotional-focused coping
- Gender
  - Women → emotional-focused coping
  - Men → problem-focused coping
- Controllability
- Available resources

Practice Time!

- Right and Left group → make a U shape for each group
- Read the handout on Problem VS Emotional Focused Coping
- Discuss the following cases and define the dynamic of both ways of coping

Effects of Coping

- Coping has two effects → model of stress and illness:
  - Reduce the intensity and duration of the stressor itself
  - Reduce the likelihood that stress will lead to illness
- Effective coping terminates, minimizes or shortens the stressor (Harnish et al, 2000)

Coping & Positive Outcomes

- Stressful events → may also lead to positive changes in people lives
  - Stress-related growth (Park et al, 1996)
  - Benefit finding (Tennen & Affleck, 1999)
  - Meaning making (Park & Folkman, 1997)
  - Growth-orientated functioning and crisis growth (Holahan et al, 1996)
- Cognitive adaptation (Taylor, 1983) and Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000)